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will be completed. It might be supposed that the result of this forcible compression of the two woods would leave a ragged edge, but this is not the case, the joint being so singularly perfect as to be inappreciable to the touch; indeed, the inlaid wood fits more accurately than the process of fitting, matching, and filling up with glue, as practised in the ordinary mode of inlaying.

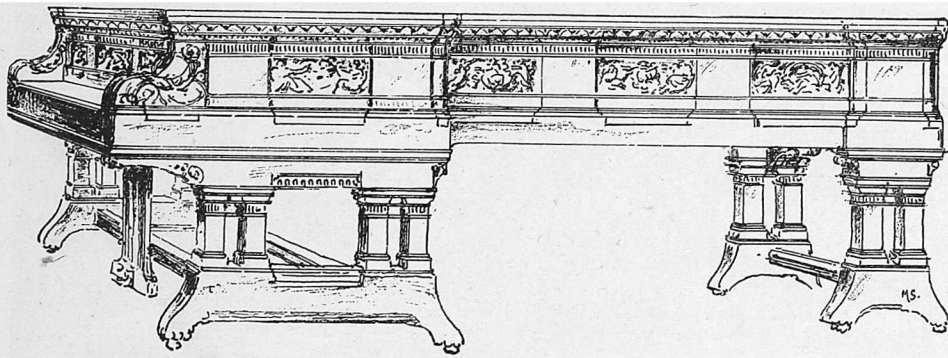
PRAYER BOOK ILLUMINATION.

It is gratifying to note that young ladies in America are doing some excellent prayer-book illumination. One, a subscriber in New Rochelle, New York, has lately completed a work of this kind, which would have been no discredit to one of the masters of the art in the middle ages. The religious symbolism of coloring is carefully observed with all the knowledge of a devout churchwoman. Yet the decoration of no two of the pages is alike, and harmony is everywhere maintained. Many of the floral designs are direct studies from nature. The young lady, determined to have the work wholly unique, had a special font of old English black face type made for this prayer-book, and after the single copy had been printed from it the type was destroyed. The binding of the volume is characterized by the same faultless taste as marks the text and illumination. The covers are of pure white vellum and pierced silver. Every page is so well secured in its place that the book might be in use almost for centuries, and, with proper care, would remain uninjured. With the hope that others of our readers may be encouraged to similar endeavors, we give this month for their guidance reproductions of several borders taken from a beautiful French manuscript of the sixteenth century. There are no less than sixteen distinct designs, it will be seen. These, together with the many borders and initials for illumination given in *THE ART AMATEUR* last summer (see numbers of June, July, August, and September) will afford abundant material for the decoration of a prayer-book. The very full practical instructions on the art of illumination which we gave at that time really leave nothing to be said concerning the treatment of the designs published in the present number.

Hints for the Home.

To stand on either side the brass fender before the hearth, a long and slender vase of Japanese pottery or porcelain, in low tones of color, looks well when filled with certain dried grasses, cat-tails, and plumes of Pampas grass.

ONE hears a great deal about "flatness" in decorative art, but that does not mean distortion; the absence of strong light and shadow, and of perspective, and the broad edging lines will make objects flat enough without squeezed-out drawing.



ENGLISH DESIGN FOR A GRAND PIANO.

By watching one's opportunity in turning over the wares in some of the large Japanese shops, it is possible to pick up a handsome harlequin set of after-dinner coffee-cups, and of fruit or nut and bonbon plates, at from fifty to seventy-five cents for each article.

A NEW "gypsy," or tripod table, has been introduced, the legs covered with plush like the top. Around the edge of the circular top hangs a heavy silk fringe which also finishes the legs. A scarf of plush embroidered with gold, and fringed with silk is knotted at the intersection of the legs.

The ordinary music-stool is usually an ugly, and uselessly heavy article of furniture, and a pleasing substitute might be found in the old-fashioned four-legged single seats, which are otherwise picturesque and convenient, and may, when not in use, be pushed under the piano, table, or long-legged cabinet.

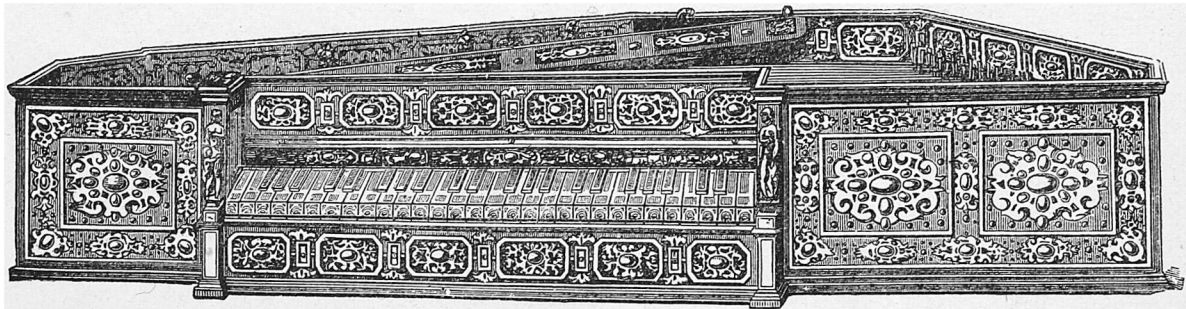
FOR rooms fitted in chintz or cretonne, and for country-house use, have been revived those delightful old curtains of tamed muslin; with this difference that where monstrous flowers, and vines with grapes, once formed the design, we now

have small conventional patterns powdered over the curtains, and a border to match, to finish them.

Curtains ought to be hung so that they can constantly be taken down to be brushed, and, if necessary, cleaned with bread-crumbs or bran. It is a great economy to have a second-best set of curtains to put up during the dark days of winter; beside, the change is pleasant to the eye, which gets wearied of always seeing exactly the same color and pattern framing the outside view.

AN east-side cabinet-maker has made a lucky hit, by the production of small mahogany tea-tables made after an English model, with two drop-leaves and a steady set of supports below, which endear them to the hearts of all tea-drinking housekeepers. These dainty tables are just of a height to reach the elbow of the lady while sitting, and at ordinary times they occupy some quiet corner unobserved.

For a dining-table there is no light to be compared to the soft radiance of plenty of candles. They should be in branches tall enough to be above the level of the eyes, and should be of a kind which does not flicker or run. The light from the sideboard and sides of the room should be sufficient to prevent shadows from being cast on the table. Candles are not really so very expensive as compared with gas, when it is considered what damage gas does to the furniture and silver. Then dinner does



SIXTEENTH CENTURY ITALIAN SPINET.

IN THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

not last very long; and everybody and everything looks so much better in the mild light of wax or composite, it is worth while trying to have it.

It is really astonishing at how comparatively low a price good specimens of Japanese faience of the coarser kinds, but excellent in shape and color, may now be had. Flower-pots, which when supplemented by a palm or a rubber-plant, make such a good bit of drawing-room decoration, are for sale in gray-green crackle ware, in stone-gray ware dotted with blue figures and with deep blue borders, or in blue Nankin china at prices varying from two to five dollars.

In common with tambourines, guitars, and spinets, ancient harps are being carefully unearthed in the auction-rooms, and brought home to decorate the much crowded modern interior. There is not much hope that proficiency in execution on this graceful old instrument will be generally attained in the present generation, but then, as a pretty girl who had just acquired a harp for her music-room observed; "What difference does that make? It's such a capital thing to pose against!"

BROWN paper is very useful in household decoration. Pretty screens of coarse grocer's paper, painted in oils, are often used. An old wooden mantelpiece may be covered with this coarse paper and painted roughly, but most effectively, with pink and white foxgloves and leaves, or with red poppies. Paper can be only a temporary decoration, but in country villages occasions often arrive—such as impromptu festivities, church socials, and weddings—when a speedy decoration is most valuable.

LONG, full undercurtains of lace or Madras muslin are gradually drifting out of fashion. In their stead, one sees, in most of the new artistic interiors, an unbroken sweep of plush or of raw silk on either side the window frame, through which the ex-

pense of shining plate glass appears uncovered, save by a shade of embroidered silk or holland. A brass jardinière, filled with palms and ferns helps to do the work of excluding curious eyes, and the advantage gained by a break in the floor-line and wall space through admission of the window recesses, is noticeably good. Where thin curtains are necessary, those hung close to the sash are advisable. Gold-wrought Madras muslin, thin yellow silk, painted and embroidered, and bolting-cloth similarly treated, are most employed by artists in decoration.

When a young couple commence furnishing they should content themselves with the mere necessities of life, until they have acquired the knowledge of what they want and discovered the best means of procuring it. A few cottage chairs and kitchen tables can be made by means of cushions and covers be made to do for a year or so, and will save a great deal more than they cost in preventing money being thrown away in a hurry on unsuitable purchases. In cities furniture can be hired, and returned as it is replaced at leisure.

THE simplest method of staining a floor is to get from a dealer in paints half a gallon of oak stain ready mixed, pour it into a basin, and cover the floor with it, using an ordinary hog's-hair paint brush. Do not tread more than you can help on the part you have stained; of course you would do the floor near the door last. If one wash of the stain does not make as dark a tint as you wish, wait till it is quite dry, and give it a second. When it is quite dry the housemaid can rub it up with bees-wax and tur-

pentine, or she may make a mixture of these two ingredients with a little resin, warmed until it is all liquid, and then when it is cool rubbed on with a cloth and polished up with a brush.

IN papering the upper part of a wall above a stenciled dado, the following shades will be found to go well together: Paper, a light shade of gray; dado, darker shades of gray, relieved by a few narrow lines and touches of pure vermilion. Paper, cream color; dado, shades of Vandyke brown. Paper, fawn color; dado, flowers with tints of salmon and orange shaded with lake, leaves and stems of shades of grays and browns. Paper, pale terra-cotta; dado, deep shade of terra-cotta, with Egyptian designs outlined with black.

DECORATIVE art allows every scope for beauty of form and of color, but dispenses with aerial effects and to a great degree with shadows. The wall behind the painting is understood to be there; there should be no attempt at deception in any way. The outlines should be most carefully drawn, and accentuated by a decided line of color of some warm dark shade all round each object. Chiaroscuro is as much out of place as perspective, carried to any marked point; though in all drawing, however flat, a knowledge of the laws of perspective must be useful. Flowers (of course single ones are infinitely preferable) should be drawn with great attention to structural form, but should be treated in a conventional manner—i. e. with a certain amount of stiffness and regularity, not rambling about as the plant from

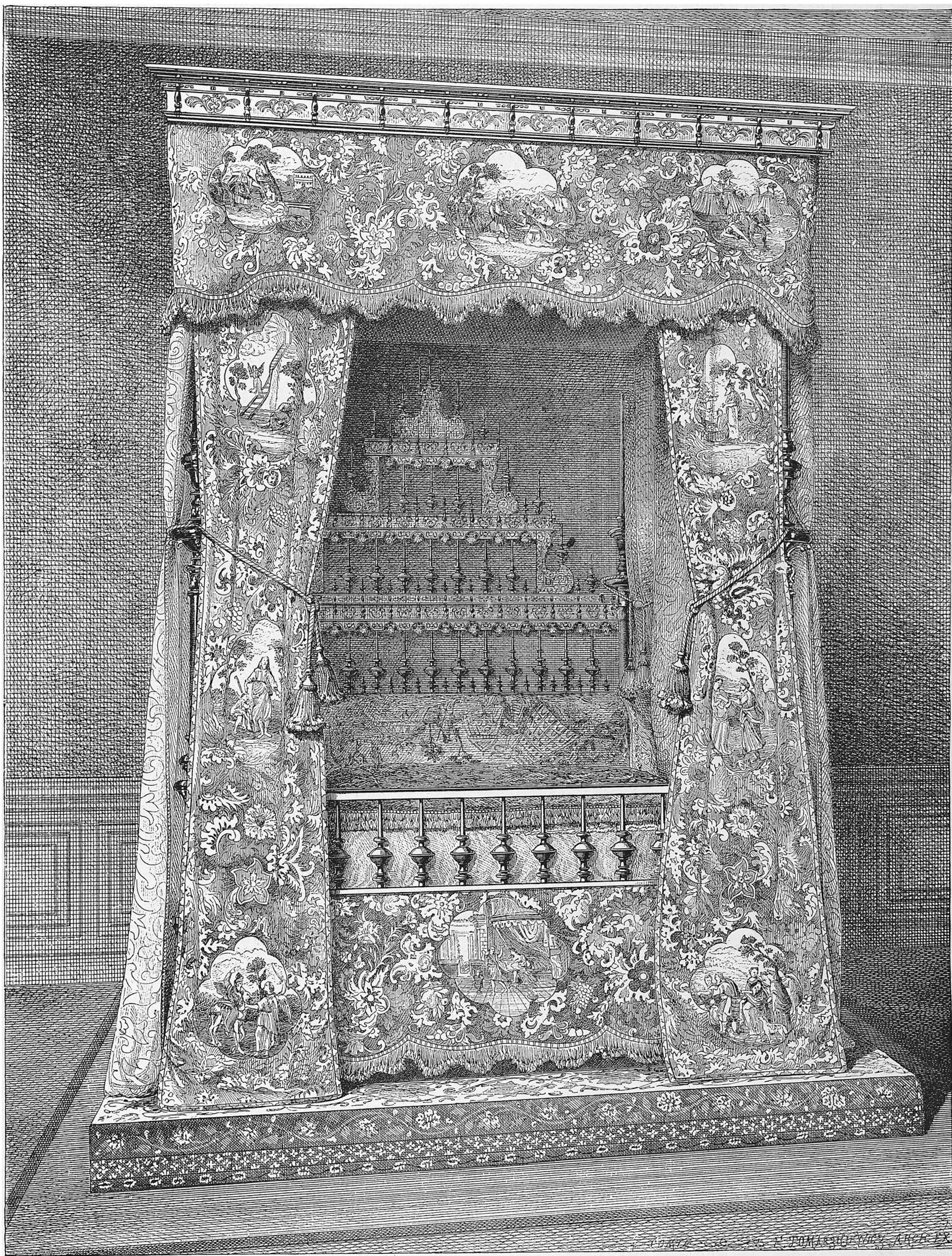
which they are copied may have elected to do. In short, decorative art, though it refers to nature, does not copy exactly all that it finds there, but selects what is best adapted to its purpose. This regularity, with the absence of strong lights, reflected lights and shadows, and with the few colors employed (at least, at one time), may seem calculated to render art that is severely decorative also somewhat monotonous and uninteresting, but this will not be found to be the case in practice.

It is strongly advised that all pictures not in themselves worthy of a place on the walls in our homes should be taken down, and all worth looking at placed where they can be seen on a level with the eye. To hang up a landscape or print or portrait in a sitting-room which is not worth looking at, simply because the wall is "bare," is a mistake. Spaces of blank wall are to be prized exceedingly, particularly when covered with an interesting, well-designed paper. To spot a room about with photographs and miniatures, with mementoes of sea-weed and dried ferns, or wretched water-colors by different members of the family, is ruinous to the general effect. Relics which are only treasures from association ought to be kept for the private apartments or locked drawers of those to whom they belong.

The decoration of connected rooms should agree. A pole and curtain should be placed in each room, when a connecting doorway is made, and an apparently generous width may be gained by the poles being long enough to admit of the curtains extending beyond each jamb of the doorway. Double curtains afford effectual warmth and cosiness, and when partly withdrawn, or looped back with thick worsted or silken cords, allow a partial view of either room, fascinating in its look of comfort. Doorway curtains or portières should, of course, look well when seen from either side. Portières look well made of serge, or serge-cloth, in soft greens or peacock blues, and may be decorated most simply with an ornamental stitch worked in silken cord all round the edges, harmonizing or contrasting gently with the chosen color. Silk with a stamped velvet pattern and silken lining would make a rich-looking portière.

IN the decoration of door panels flowers are peculiarly suitable where brilliancy is desired—flowers drawn in a somewhat stiff and conventional manner, each leaf drawn separately, and not exactly perhaps where nature would have placed it, but where conventionally we feel assured a leaf should be placed. Only one sort of plant should be painted in each panel. Many flowering trees are excellently adapted as studies for conventional designs, as the medlar tree, the service tree, and the barberry. Beside such very well-known plants as sun-flowers and lilies, one may study with profit the clematis, chrysanthemum, and such stately plants as the Eastern poppy, single dahlias, or the white Japanese anemone. Scarlet or gold-colored flowers look best on a black door; on an oak-colored one more delicate shades have a pleasing effect—for instance, apple-blossom, weigelia, or azakias. The ground of the panels may be different from the general color of the door, but of course all the panels must be of the same ground color. All the flowers and leaves should be outlined with narrow black lines. Figures also look well, but are much more difficult to accomplish satisfactorily. They also must be outlined, must be kept somewhat flat, and the colors used must be brilliant and well-contrasting ones. A background of gold or bronze looks well.

THE painting of delicate little articles of furniture, if properly managed, may be a domestic occupation without appreciable annoyance. If possible a room not otherwise in use should be chosen; and the work should be carried on with as little movement as may be, to prevent the dispersion of dust, which falling upon the paint when wet, would greatly mar its smooth surface. The object to be decorated should be conscientiously rubbed to a glassy smoothness with sand-paper and brown paper. The paint, to suit the sensitive artist, should be picture oil-paint, sold in single, double, and treble tubes; turpentine must be gradually mixed in, until the paint is of the consistency of thin cream, when it may be laid on thinly with variously-sized soft brushes, avoiding streaks, blots, or smears. After a coat of paint has been effectually applied, ample time for drying, in perfect stillness, should be given; then should follow a patient rubbing down with soft paper, to ensure smoothness. This process should be repeated until the artist is satisfied with the depth and soundness of color. Delicate little diapers or other decorative ornaments may at last be executed in harmonious colors, and when the work is perfectly hard and dry, a coat of the best hard white varnish should be quickly applied. Good shades of suitable greens for furniture may be gained by differently mixed quantities of middle-green lake, chroma, black, and white.



SIXTEENTH CENTURY PORTUGUESE BED OF ROSEWOOD INLAID WITH COPPER.

EMBROIDERED FRENCH HANGINGS WITH MEDALLIONS WORKED IN SILK REPRESENTING SCRIPTURE SCENES.

IN THE COLLECTION OF AUGUSTE DORMEUIL.

